

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS KATHMANDU 001138

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR SA/INS
LONDON FOR CGURNEY
NSC FOR MILLARD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: MAOISTS UTILIZING TRADE UNIONS TO ADD
PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT

REF: A. 2001 KATHMANDU 1676

[B](#). KATHMANDU 152

[C](#). KATHMANDU 740

[D](#). KATHMANDU 770

[1](#). (SBU) Summary: Over the past week, garment manufacturers have been in negotiations with leaders of the Maoist-affiliated trade union. The Maoists have requested a dramatic increase in salaries and permanent employment. The Maoists have issued vague threats to pressure the garment manufacturers to accede. The Maoists' recent use of trade unions may indicate a new urban political strategy. It appears that the Maoists have not yet sought cooperation from mainstream trade unions. End summary.

[2](#). (SBU) Over the past week, members of the Garment Association of Nepal (GAN) have been in negotiations with leaders of the Maoist-affiliated All Nepal Trade Union Federation. According to GAN President Kiran Saakha the Maoists have requested a dramatic increase in monthly salaries (from USD 30 to USD 78) and an end to the use of temporary workers by demanding that garment manufacturers bring such workers onto the permanent payroll. The recent Maoist activism on behalf of garment workers echoes demands made in August 2001 (ref A). Rather than threaten immediate strikes, the Maoist trade union negotiators prefaced their demands with threats; they claimed responsibility for the slaying of Inspector General of Police Shrestha (ref B) and stated they could make doing business very difficult. The Maoist negotiators claimed that as they occupy ninety-eight percent of the country's territory, they should be extended the same respect the manufacturers give the Government of Nepal. Despite the threatening overtones, a special committee of the GAN has engaged them in dialogue for five days without the Maoists calling a strike or threatening specific harm to the companies.

[3](#). (SBU) Calls by the Embassy's political specialist to spokespersons of the two largest trade unions, the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (affiliated with the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist) and the Nepal Trade Union Congress (affiliated with the Nepali Congress Party), revealed that they were completely unaware of the Maoist trade union's demands.

[4](#). (SBU) Comment: These recent actions by the Maoist-affiliated trade union may represent an evolving urban strategy. This strategy may have been tested first by the Maoist-affiliated student union, which appropriated existing grievances of the mainstream student unions and led them into the streets (ref C and D). Similarly, the Maoist trade union has taken up complaints of low-pay and employment insecurity and may utilize them to try to garner broad appeal. Given the mainstream trade unions' lack of awareness of the Maoist campaign, a "joint movement" of the trade unions--similar to that conducted by the student wings--seems unlikely in the coming weeks.

BOGGS